

Introduction

Rocky View County is updating the Bears paw Area Structure Plan, and we want to hear from you.

An Area Structure Plan (ASP) is a statutory document approved by Council and adopted by Bylaw. It is a decision-making tool that guides growth and helps staff and Council evaluate land use changes, subdivision, and development proposals.

The ASP explains future land use, transportation, environmental protection, emergency services, general design, and utility service requirements. When making decisions regarding development in an ASP area, Council must consider the plan as well as other factors like County economic goals, County-wide growth, and the ability to provide servicing. An ASP does not predict the rate of development within the plan area. Growth and development is determined by market demand.

The current Bears paw Area Structure Plan was adopted in 1994. Review of the ASP will provide a planning framework that respects the values of the community, accounts for current conditions, and aligns with the important larger scale plans that have been adopted since the original ASP was completed.

Why are we reviewing the existing ASPs?

BEARSPAW COMMUNITY

- Bears paw's population has grown in the last 10 years by approximately 34%, from 4,803 to 6,442.
- A growing share of the County's population is nearing retirement age; and,
- Throughout the County, country residential growth has slowed.

THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK IS CHANGING

Other local, regional, and provincial planning documents provide direction regarding land use and development. The Municipal Development Plan, Interim Growth Plan, and South Saskatchewan Regional Plan aim to balance the social, environmental, and economic factors related to development. In order to align with these plans, the updated Bears paw ASP will consider:

- Managing residential growth and retaining the rural character of the County;
- Strategies to reduce the amount of land taken up by development;
- Environmentally responsible growth strategies; and
- The economic well-being of Rocky View County and the greater region.

EXISTING ASP

The existing Bears paw ASP is over 20 years old. Significant development has occurred in this area, including the creation of Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park in 2008 and Area Structure Plan in 2017. As part of the Bears paw ASP review process, there is the potential to amend the existing ASP boundaries. This is an important issue for the community that will impact future planning and services.

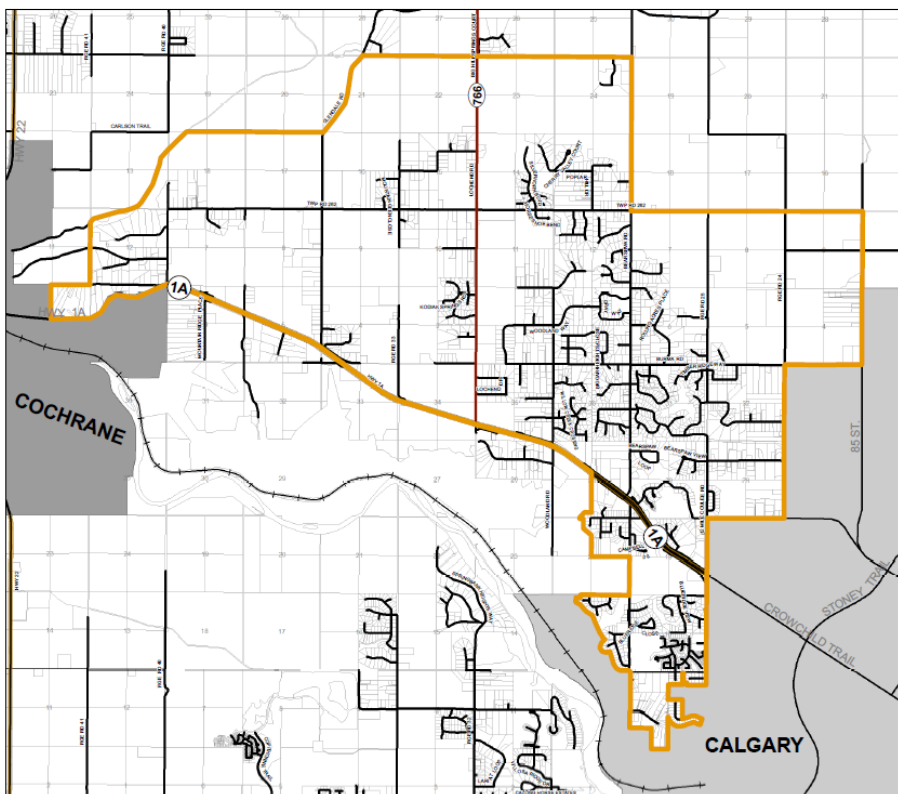


Area Structure Plan **BEARSPAW**


The updated Bearspaw ASP will:

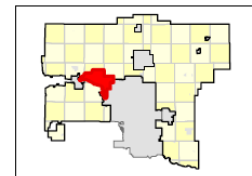
- Respect the values of the community;
- Reflect current conditions and future growth projections;
- Set out a vision for growth and development that improves our quality of life while protecting what we love; and,
- Align with the important larger scale plans adopted after the original Bearspaw ASP.

Map 1: Plan Area Location



Map 1:
Plan Area
Location

 ASP Boundary



0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Km



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Land Use & Growth

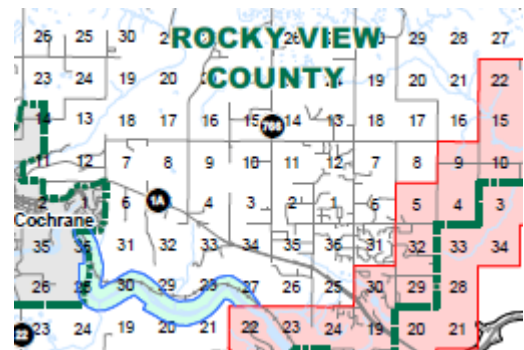
The updated Bears paw ASP will include a land use strategy for future development that outlines how Bears paw will accommodate population growth. Specifically, the ASP will describe the intended form and type of development together with any development opportunities and constraints.

Opportunities and Constraints

Rocky View County grapples with a challenge common to all rural communities located on the edge of an urban centre – growth pressure. The County’s population has grown by almost 6,000 people in the last 10 years to our current population of over 39,400. The challenge for the County is to accommodate growth while also meeting other goals such as maintaining rural character.

The existing Bears paw ASP has been in effect for more than 20 years. During this time, Bears paw has continued to grow and the planning framework has evolved. For example:

- The **Interim Growth Plan** (2018), adopted by the Province, encourages environmentally responsible land-use planning and growth management. It also supports economic well-being and competitiveness of the region.
- The **South Saskatchewan Regional Plan** (2014), adopted by the Province, encourages the efficient use of land, providing six principles for reducing the footprint of new developments. It also supports building sustainable communities, and the preservation of environmental features.
- The **Rocky View / Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan** (2012), was created to minimize land use conflicts across municipal borders, provide opportunities for collaboration and communication, and outline processes for the resolution of issues that may arise. The Plan identifies a County residential growth corridor in Bears paw.
- The **Rocky View County Plan** (2013), identifies Bears paw as a country residential area within the county, and encourages development forms that retain rural character and reduce the overall development footprint on the landscape. In addition, a highway business area, located along Highway 1A, has been identified for development within Bears paw.



HOW LAND USE IS CONSIDERED IN THE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

The ASP will have a land use strategy for future subdivision and development of lands which considers population growth, constraints and opportunities. It will also include policies to ensure an appropriate transition both between adjacent land uses and adjoining municipalities.



Servicing

In reviewing the Bears paw ASP, Rocky View County will identify and assess Bears paw's essential infrastructure services (water, wastewater, stormwater, etc.) to ensure that they accommodate future growth in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner.

The ASP process will be supported by technical studies that identify cost effective and environmentally responsible servicing strategies for the anticipated land uses.

In 2010, the County retained third party expertise to develop master servicing plans under the Bears paw Community Development Strategy process. These plans will provide the foundation for servicing considerations for the ASP review.

Strategies may be updated to leverage new opportunities and ensure the land uses captured in the final Bears paw ASP can be serviced in a responsible manner.

Water

Potable water servicing to existing homes and approved developments is provided by a combination of individual wells, water co-ops, and private water utilities.

The ASP area does not currently have access to a regional public potable water treatment and distribution system to support development. There is no current infrastructure in the plan area that is capable of delivering fire flows and volumes to accommodate comprehensive development without considerable upgrades.

The ASP process will need to develop strategies to ensure this can be provided in accordance with County standards and provincial requirements. The County's servicing strategy for the ASP area will include provisions to ensure the costs of servicing are paid for by development.

Wastewater

The majority of the existing plan area does not currently have access to a regional wastewater collection, treatment, and effluent disposal system. Local facilities do not have the capacity to accommodate development in the plan area without expansion. The ASP will evaluate all available options to provide responsible and sustainable wastewater service to the plan area. New infrastructure costs will be paid for by development.

For new developments, County Policy 449 provides direction regarding wastewater treatment requirements. It outlines that the County does not support any type of private wastewater treatment for lot sizes smaller than 1.98 acres, which is the minimum size of Residential One District parcels.

This policy also outlines the requirements for where connection to a decentralized or regional system is required for new development.

The ASP process will involve developing a new wastewater servicing strategy for Bears paw to ensure that new development meets County Policy and Alberta Environment Standards.

Stormwater

Bearspaw is primarily home to country residential acreages that have rural stormwater management strategies including ditches, culverts, swales, and stormwater ponds to manage excess water resulting from heavy rainfalls or snow.

County policies for environmental protection will guide the ASP (including wetland and riparian protection, erosion and sediment controls, and overall stormwater management and source protection). Low impact development and water re-use may be incorporated wherever possible.

In the last decade, area development was guided by the Bearspaw-Glenbow Master Drainage Plan (Worley Parsons, 2010).

Opportunities and Constraints

The Bearspaw area is part of two very important watersheds; the Bow River watershed and the West Nose Creek watershed, and is upstream of the City of Calgary drinking water sources. The County must balance growth pressures with environmental stewardship to ensure these important watersheds are protected. This will be a key consideration in the servicing strategies prepared to support the ASP.

HOW SERVICING RELATES TO THE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

Servicing strategies for water, sewer, and storm drainage will be developed based on land features as well as development forms. The County will ensure the Bearspaw area can be developed responsibly and feasibly.

Where obstacles arise, the County will develop solutions that consider key stakeholders and the regulatory framework.

Transportation

In reviewing the Bears paw ASP, we will consider transportation needs and opportunities, including the establishment of new pathways and Active Transportation Networks to develop a more cohesive community. We will also consider future transportation needs for identified land use scenarios, and review the existing transportation network.

Future development in Bears paw will need to respect existing residents and communities. Transportation linkages and access must be planned in accordance with the County's Servicing Standards to minimize traffic impacts on local residents.

The ASP process will include the preparation of a transportation plan that will ensure adequate connectivity and rights of way are protected for future growth. This will include assessing and upgrading the local road network to accommodate new development. This may be done in a planned manner through individual subdivisions, or community plans to ensure an adequate level of service exists at every stage of the development process.

Challenges and Opportunities

Future plans within the city of Calgary, town of Cochrane and Glenbow Ranch Area Structure Plan are important considerations for the Bears paw area. Increasing connectivity to improve traffic flows through the plan area will be an important consideration.

The Highway 1A corridor is a key factor influencing future land use and planning for the ASP. The Province has identified future improvements in the corridor and will be a key stakeholder through the ASP review process.

As the plan area lies within the corridor connecting Calgary to Cochrane, there will also be opportunities to explore transit service with our urban neighbors.

The ASP team will reach out to these stakeholders to determine feasibility and ensure the transportation network plan accommodates multi-modal options for future implementation wherever possible.

Connections to and from the existing communities to the north will need to address the Highway 1A corridor.

Pathways

Provision for walking, cycling, and equestrian pathways will also need to be considered in reviewing the ASP. The updated ASP will examine increasing the connectivity of pathways / pedestrian networks within the community, linking in with regional pathways and the development of Active Transportation networks in the area.

The establishment of pathways, parks, and other open space across the County is currently guided by the **Rocky View County Parks and Open Space Master Plan** adopted in 2011, but no specific plan for pathways currently exists specifically for the Bears paw community.

HOW TRANSPORTATION RELATES TO THE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

The ASP will combine land use and transportation planning to ensure the transportation network can adequately support any proposed development in the plan area. In updating the ASP, we will need to identify current and planned infrastructure under both Provincial and County jurisdiction.

Economic Development

As part of the Bears paw ASP process, the County will review the current business environment in Bears paw and new economic opportunities. The potential for new business areas will be explored.

Bears paw currently has limited commercial development, given its small population and location next to the city of Calgary. Bears paw residents are served by commercial developments in neighbouring Calgary to the east and, to a lesser extent, in Cochrane to the west. The adjacent Glenbow Ranch ASP includes provisions for a future Hamlet Commercial development to serve the day-to-day needs of local residents.

Opportunities and Constraints

The goal of business development in the County is to provide jobs and strengthen the County's tax base. A healthy tax base includes business areas.

In the County Plan, Rocky View identifies one Highway Business Area within Bears paw for future commercial opportunities located along Highway 1A and Bears paw Road.

This Highway Business Area is intended to provide destination commercial services to the travelling public, local business services, local employment, and small business opportunities.

WHY ARE ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS IMPORTANT TO THE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

A primary goal of updating the existing Bears paw ASP is to align with other statutory plans such as the County Plan which set priorities for economic development. The new ASP should reflect the community's economic goals for the future.

Potential ASP Boundary Changes

As part of updating the Bears paw ASP, there is the potential to change the boundaries of the ASP area and / or to separate the plan into distinct areas.

The Bears paw ASP is approximately 25,000 acres in size. Located within the northwest quadrant of the County, between the town of Cochrane and the city of Calgary, north of the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park and the Bow River, and south of Township Roads 262 and 264. Bears paw has seen an average of 58 homes built per year since its adoption. There are currently 2,213 dwellings within the Plan area, and a potential for a total of 7,411.

The BASP provides a framework for balancing a county residential community, agricultural opportunities, and a limited area for rural commercial uses along Highway 1A.

The area contains 12 approved conceptual schemes, the majority of which are largely built out. Further potential for growth remains within the Watermark Conceptual Scheme, with 285 additional lots, and the Silverhorn Conceptual Scheme with 54 potential lots.

WHY BOUNDARIES ARE IMPORTANT TO THE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

A primary goal of updating the existing Bears paw ASP is to decide on a boundary for the ASP that accounts for growth projections, local needs, and development potential. The ASP will also identify existing development and adjacent lands that have development opportunities and constraints.



Aggregate

As part of the Bearspaw ASP process, the County will review the current policies for natural resource extraction within the plan area. The appropriateness of aggregate development in Bearspaw will be explored.

Aggregate extraction is an important land use consideration in the County. Although aggregate resources satisfy a local, regional and provincial need, extraction activities often cause community concern due to the potential for significant impact on adjacent land uses and the environment.

Aggregate development in Canada predominantly falls under provincial jurisdiction. However, within Alberta, the regulation of aggregate development is split between the Province and municipalities.

The County is responsible for approving land use and issuing development permits for all aggregate extractions. Additionally, aggregate pits of all sizes are subject to provincial legislation, with pits greater than five hectares on private land being further regulated by the Province through the Code of Practice for Pits. The Code of Practice addresses a number of items including pit operations, reclamation, and environmental monitoring.

Currently there are a total of five parcels in the Bearspaw ASP area designated for aggregate extraction and one operating gravel pit. The existing ASP identifies tertiary gravel throughout much of the central and southern plan area.

Proposals for aggregate extraction are assessed in accordance with the County Plan, Land Use Bylaw and Servicing Standards.

WHY IS AGGREGATE EXTRACTION IMPORTANT TO THE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW

A primary goal of updating the existing Bearspaw ASP is to confirm appropriate uses within the plan area. It will also include policies to ensure an appropriate transition between adjacent land uses.

Mapping Bearspaw

The County has mapped existing constraints, features, and developments to identify where any future development may not be achievable. Four maps are included in this handout:

Map 1 – Bearspaw Existing Land Use Municipal Lands

This map shows all existing land use designations and reserve lands.

Map 2 – Bearspaw Transportation

This map shows the existing transportation infrastructure in Bearspaw.

Map 3 – Bearspaw Environmental

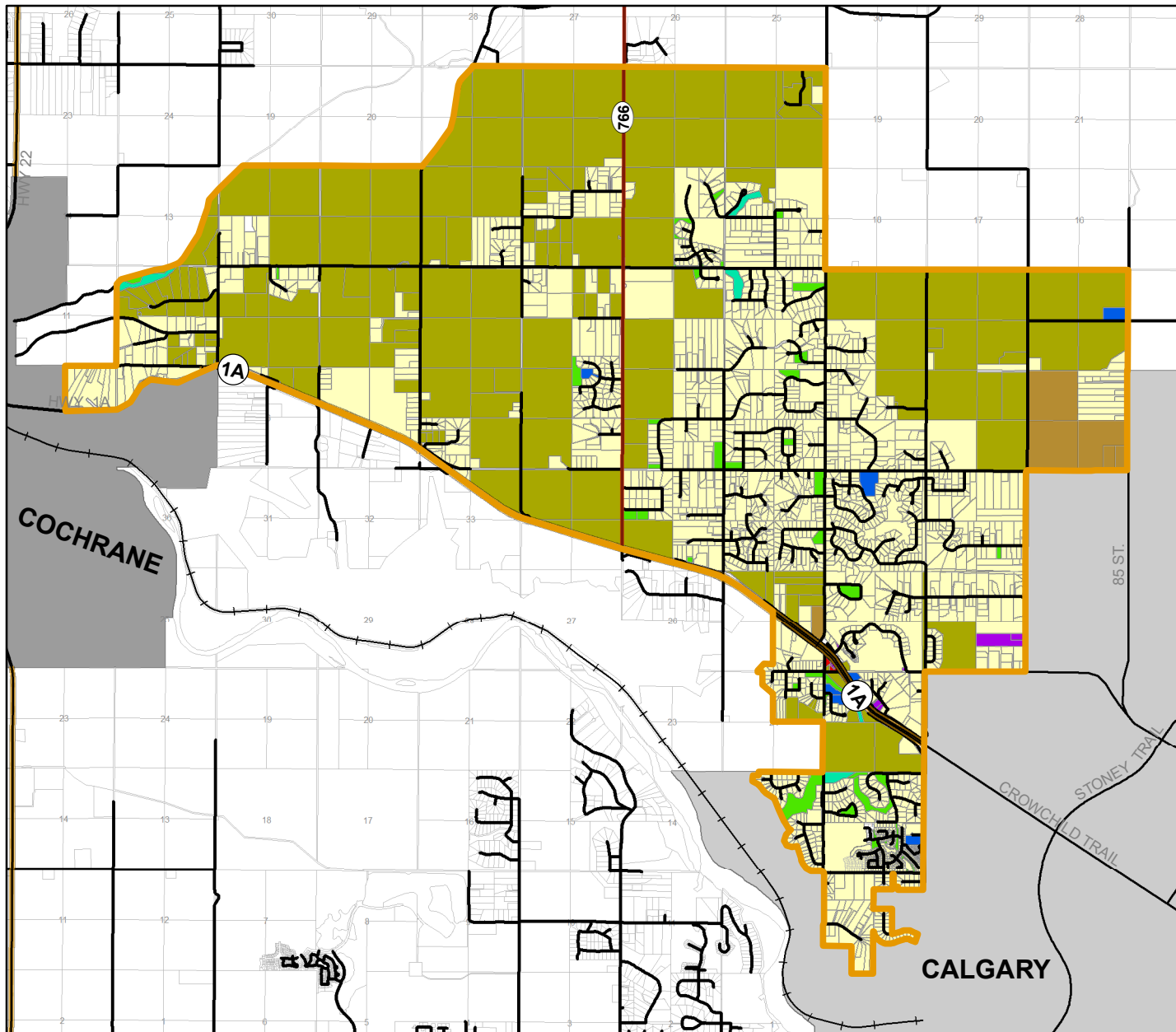
This map shows lands which have riparian setbacks, wetlands, significant slopes, and key wildlife and biodiversity zones. These areas will require special consideration for any future development.

Map 4 – Bearspaw Water and Wastewater

This map shows the existing servicing infrastructure in Bearspaw.



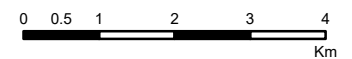
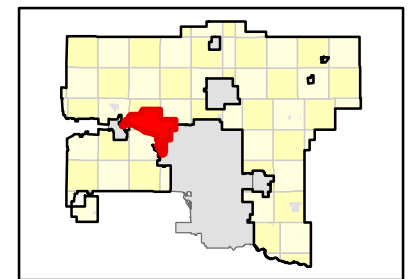
Existing Land Use & Municipal Lands



- ASP Boundary
- Environmental Reserve
- Municipal Reserve

Existing Land Use

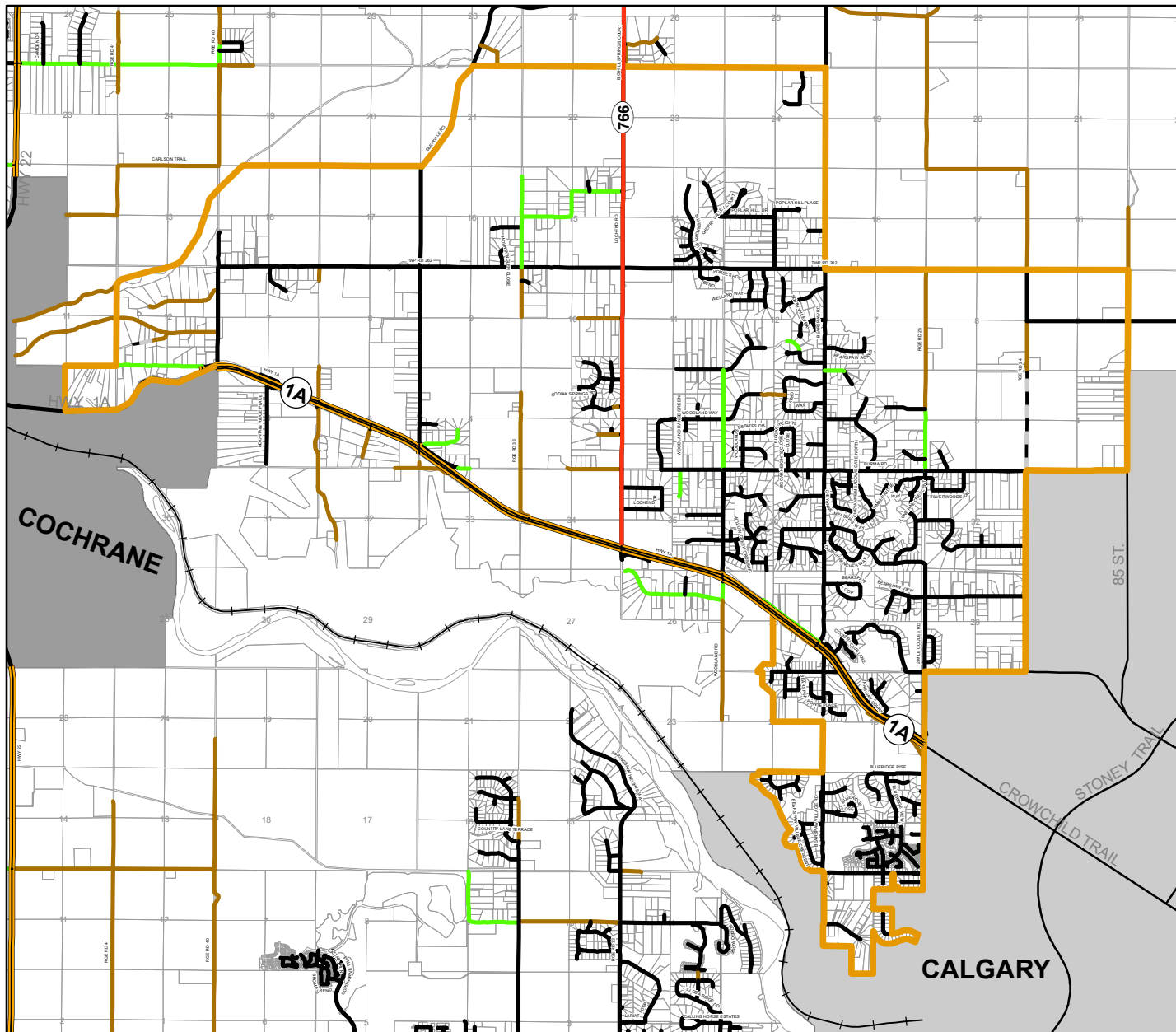
- Agriculture
- Business
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public Service
- Residential



This map is conceptual in nature. No measurements or area calculations should be taken from this map.




Transportation



 ASP Boundary

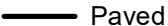
Road Surface

 ChipSeal

 Dirt

 Gravel

 Oil

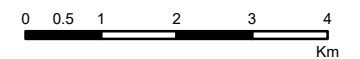
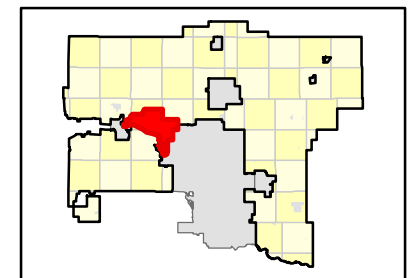
 Paved

Highways

 PRIMARY HWY

 SECONDARY HWY

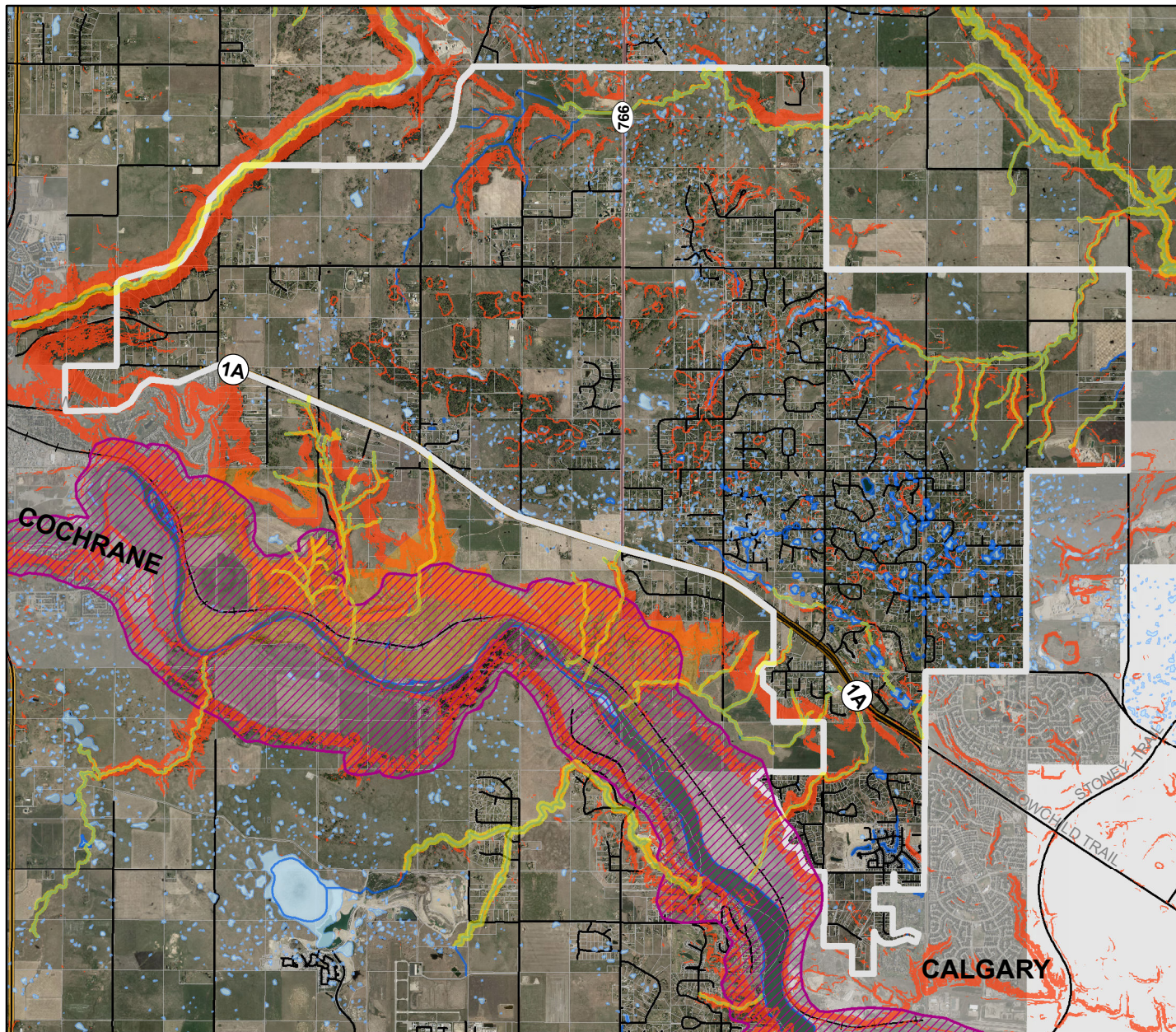
 Railway Lines



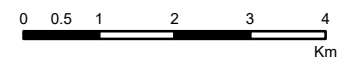
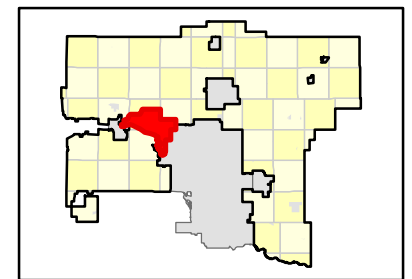
This map is conceptual in nature. No measurements or area calculations should be taken from this map.



Environmental



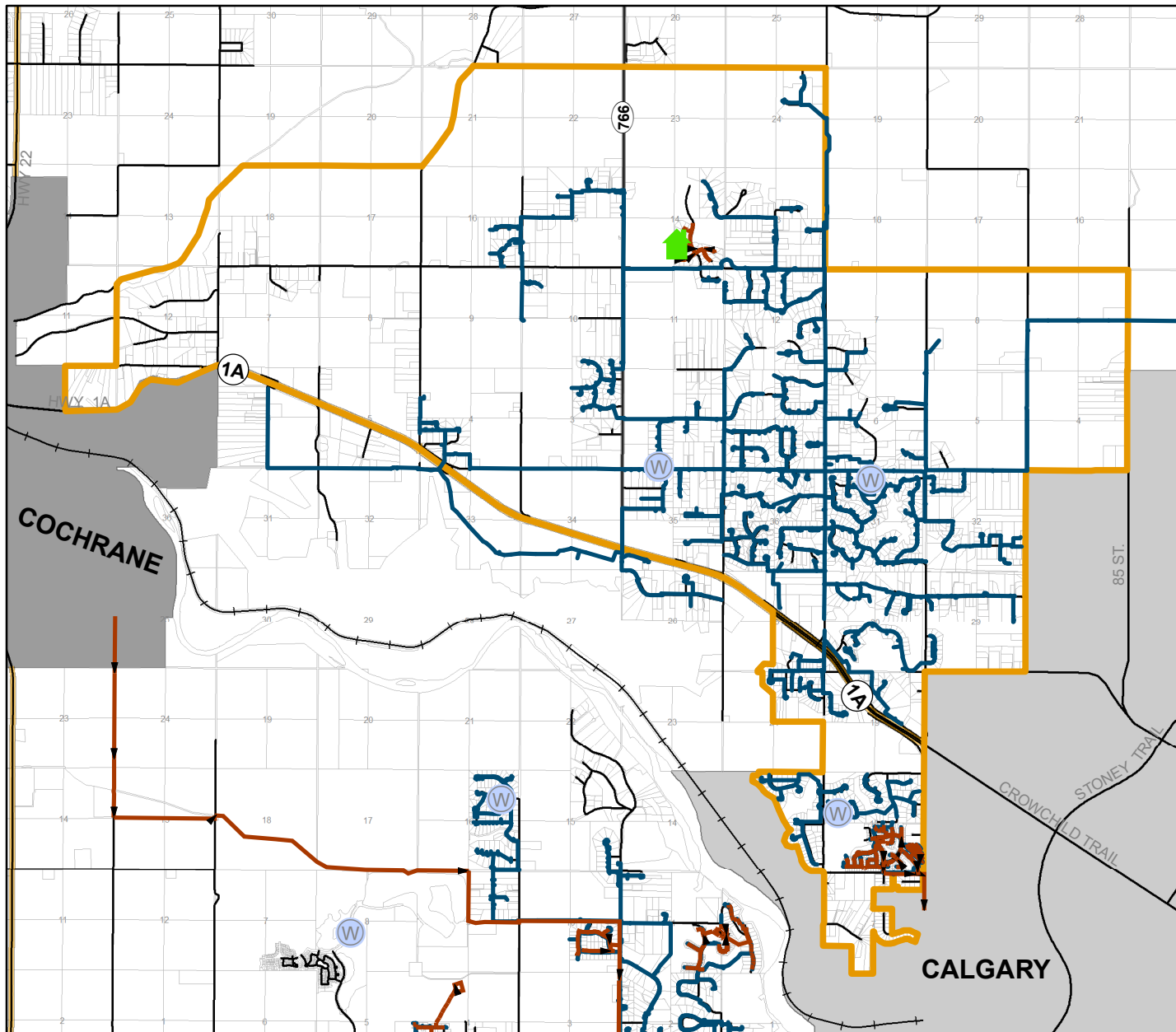
- ASP Boundary
- Riparian Setbacks
- Key Wildlife & Biodiversity Zones
- Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park
- Surface Water
- Alberta Merged Wetland Inventory - AB Env.
- Slope 15 % +



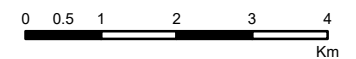
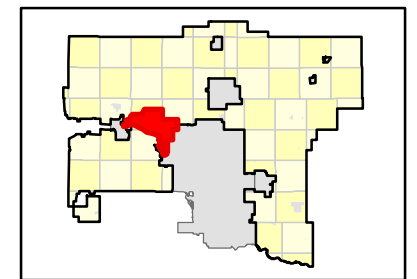
This map is conceptual in nature. No measurements or area calculations should be taken from this map.



Water & Wastewater



- ASP Boundary
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Existing Wastewater Lines
- Water Treatment Plant
- Existing Water Lines



This map is conceptual in nature. No measurements or area calculations should be taken from this map.

